The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of value to the labor and trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1573 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 1941 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 31, NO. 22

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Here's a tip! The Roosevelt Administration will not approve any legislation outlawing strikes or otherwise impairing labor's constitutional rights. But there is nothing to cheer about in this news. For the Government has discovered a simpler and much more effective way of assuring uninterrupted defense production which may prove even more disastrous to trade unions than more legislation.

The scheme is simply this—the moment management and labor fall out in any important defense industry and production stops due to a strike or lockout, the Government will step in and take over the plant under emergency powers granted to the President. The workers will then be placed in the position of Federal employes who cannot strike because that would mean the Government is striking against itself.

Anticipating such developments, President William Green served notice in his testimony before the Truman Committee that unless management and labor show the desire and the ability to settle all disputes peacefully and without shutting down production, private enterprise and free labor will suffer damaging blows in America. The moment the Government starts taking over private industry, the American system of free enterprise and free labor becomes endangered.

We say this not in criticism of the Government, which can see no other recourse, but as a warning signal to both management and labor. The danger can still be avoided. It is self-defense, both must rally to the national defense and place it above all other considerations in the months—and perhaps years—to come.

Are We Going Soft?

The leadership of the American Federation of Labor has been constantly on the alert to this danger. That is why its no-strike policy was first adopted. That is why, despite the fact that this voluntary policy proved more than 99 per cent effective, the Executive Council orders gained teeth behind it by requiring the disciplining of any local union which goes on strike before first trying to obtain a peaceful settlement by conciliation or mediation.

But the leadership of the American Federation of Labor cannot force compliance with sane, level-headed and patriotic policies. It must get cooperation from the membership of the American Federation of Labor. It believes that this membership, as well as the great mass of the American people, support the A. F. of L. policy. Let this support be translated into action! It is truly said that action speaks louder than words and the time has come for action.

Hitler and Mussolini and Stalin have a great contempt for the American people. They think we are soft. They feel that we are ready to settle for democracy and our free institutions that we will go on putting our own petty, selfish interest ahead of the national good.

Well, they have proved their assumptions. For too long a time the national morale of the American people has been slack. It has been so obvious that even our enemies abroad have not failed to notice it. But we believe that in the unlimited national emergency declared by the President the American spirit will reassert itself. We believe that free men will be glad to make sacrifices to retain their freedom. We believe that—but, boy, how we'd like to see some concrete proof of it right now!

Making the First Move

When talk begins of sacrifice, there is always the natural objection to let the other fellow start sacrificing first. That's how things stand in the country today. Everyone seems willing to sacrifice but no one is willing to make the first move. There is but one startling exception—and that is the American Federation of Labor.

The American Federation of Labor has made the first move. It now awaits similar moves by industry.

Look Mr. Businessman! How can a labor organization effectively keep its member in check and prevent strikes for better pay and conditions while the workers themselves see that their employers are reaping a rich harvest of profits from the national defense program? It is only human nature. And these workers, faced by rapidly rising living costs, are going to demand their share.

Well, Mr. Businessman, here is what you can do! Give your employes their just share. Don't hedge and don't haggle. Don't wait until tempers flare and anger rules. Act quickly and liberally. That is the way industry can do its bit for the national defense program.

It is not enough for industry to squawk about strikes. That is just a one-sided position. The thing to do is to get insurance against strikes by treating employes fairly.

Perhaps we are kidding ourselves by thinking this is possible. We will be told that such things could happen only in a Utopia. But we think that we are making a practical, hard-headed appeal to business when we say it must share profits now or endanger the profit system for all time. We think businessmen will respond when they realize that if they don't they may lose their business and the Government will take over.

Labor Will Help America Attain Record Defense Output, Meany Says

New York, N. Y.—The American Federation of Labor will rise to the national emergency and discharge its responsibility in a way that will prove beyond question that the American system of free institutions maintained by free men is superior to any other," Secretary-Treasurer George Meany told the New York Building Congress.

When America's industrial setup "really begins to roll, no country on earth will be able to equal the production rate attained," Mr. Meany predicted.

Reviewing the record of the American Federation of Labor and its affiliated unions in the national defense program, Mr. Meany declared that despite the public outcry about strikes, the facts show labor has really cooperated with the Government. The no-strike policy of the A. F. of L. has been more than 99 per cent effective, Mr. Meany said, and promises to be more so than ever before because of the action taken by the Executive Council in ordering that any union which goes on strike without seeking conciliation and mediation will be subject to disciplinary action.

"The need of the hour is for national unity," Mr. Meany continued. "Sound unity can be constructed by federal government and free, loyal labor—men must all unite in this effort. We must roll up our sleeves and we must work. We must work as we have never worked before. We must all work and we must work together. People talk and people have written of the sacrifices which Adolf Hitler achieved in Nazi Germany, but I say to you now that when our industrial setup here in free America really begins to roll, no country on earth will be able to equal the production rate attained.

"Organized labor, as represented by the American Federation of Labor, stands four-square behind the President of the United States. Organized labor knows better perhaps than any other group of citizens what happens to the liberties which we cherish when democracy goes under and totalitarianism comes into power.

"Trade unions—nor for that matter, any other form of freedom can not exist under a dictatorship. By the same token, dictators cannot long hope to maintain their power, where free trade unions operate.

"As in 1916, 1917 and 1918, so again in 1941 the American Federation of Labor, made up as it is of millions of workers who know that we cannot be good trade unionists unless we are, first of all, good citizens, is giving and will continue to give to our national government the most wholehearted type of cooperation. I cannot speak for other organizations claiming to represent American labor, but so far as the American Federation of Labor is concerned, that is where we stand.

"And so the answer to those who would inquire as to labor's responsibility in this emergency is very simple. Labor's responsibility—labor's job if you please—is to use its trade-union machinery to the very limit to produce a national defense that dictators will fear as well as respect. How will labor discharge this responsibility? How will it meet this supreme test? Speaking for the millions of workers affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, I can say to you here and now, that we will discharge our responsibility in a way that will prove beyond question that the American system of free institutions maintained by free men is superior to any other system the mind of men has ever been able to devise."

Zip! Union Contract With Talon Co. Gives Million Dollars to Workers

Meadville, Pa.—Eleven American Federation of Labor unions have concluded a fine contract covering 5,000 workers employed by Talon, Inc., wide-awake zipper slide fasteners at its huge factory here.

The agreement provides:

1—Blanket pay increases for every employe, which amount to almost a million dollars a year.

2—Time and a half for overtime and double time for Sundays and holidays.

3—Two weeks vacation with pay.

4—Five cents differential rate for night employes.

5—A closed shop.

6—No guarantees against strikes or lockouts, with provision for arbitration of disputes.

This agreement covers Tool and Die Makers Local 110, I. A. of M.; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 504; United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters of United States and Canada, Local 527; locals unions 564 and 397, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America; Local No. 656, Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America; Local Union No. 654, Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America; Local Machine Operators Union No. 20091, A. F. of L.; Slide Fastener Union No. 20092 and No. 20513, A. F. of L.; Franklin Association, Patternmakers League of North America.

In addition to the provisions of the general contract, supplementary contracts were signed also for the very union which is a party to the general contract. Each local union has adopted a proposed set of by-laws which will go into effect June 4, at which time a federated committee will be established by the Talon, Inc., Shop Federation, said committee to be empowered to settle all grievances of a general nature and negotiations.

The agreements were reached after some locals had taken strike votes. Federal Conciliators Donald and Pennsylvania State Mediators Wagner and Hodge were called in to assist in breaking the deadlock.

W. H. Whetro, A. F. of L. organizer, and John DeAmato, representing the International Association of Machinists, devoted five weeks of hard work to achieve the successful end.

Pan-American Federation of Labor To Cement Unity In This Hemisphere

Washington, D. C.—Plans for prompt reestablishment of the Pan-American Federation of Labor to promote unity of thought and purpose among labor organizations in every nation in the Western Hemisphere were adopted by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor.

President William Green disclosed the A. F. of L. will send emissaries to every Latin-American country and has maintained friendly relationships throughout the long years when it was opposed by Totalitarian's Communist influences.

"Our program", Mr. Green said, "is to cement with Latin American Government's policy of cementing unity in the Western Hemisphere. We are against the efforts which Totalitarian Labor can play an important and vital role in this effort."

As soon as the preliminary contact work has been completed, Mr. Green revealed, a convention of the Pan-American Federation of Labor will be held in Mexico City.

The new Government of Mexico, he said, has shown a cooperative spirit toward the Mexican Federation of Labor, with which the A. F. of L. has maintained friendly relationships throughout the long years when it was opposed by Totalitarian's Communist influences.

"Our program", Mr. Green said, "fits in perfectly with the American Government's policy of cementing unity in the Western Hemisphere. We are against the efforts which Totalitarian Labor can play an important and vital role in this effort."

EDITORIAL

Wendell Willkie has taken the first book of subscriptions sold in the drive of the American Labor Committee to Aid British Labor. No better illustration of the complete unity of the American people in regard to Great Britain's struggle could be found.

But an expression of the unity of the American people is not enough. Gestures of sympathy and concrete examples of generosity made by Americans are not enough. What is needed is a realization that the war which Great Britain is waging is a war in which our existence as a free nation is directly involved against us as well. It is the same relationship to Great Britain in 1941 as our civilians at home to our army fighting in Europe in 1917.

Today, all of Great Britain is the Army of Democracy and all America is Democracy's civilian front. In 1918 the fate of the civilian population of the world war decided by the success which their armies were able to achieve—in 1941 the fate of America will be decided by the success which Great Britain will achieve. That success depends more greatly upon Labor than upon any other section of our people.

Labor has its hands and its heart and soul to offer in this fight for the preservation of humanity. But even more than these, we are also able to show that the basic creed of the Nazi is an untrue and vicious thing. Labor has proven that men of all faiths and creeds can work together and live together in harmony. Labor has shown that all men, Jew and Christian, black and white, have contributions to make for the increased happiness of all. And that, that kind of Labor has demonstrated that it is impossible to achieve that happiness and security we desire unless the basis is equality.

Let us realize now and forever—this war is being fought for us by Great Britain and against us by Germany. It is our war exactly as though we were shooting guns instead of mailing them. It is our war exactly as though we were asking for bombers instead of sending them abroad. It is our war exactly as though we needed food and clothing instead of collecting them for Great Britain.

Labor must get behind the drive of the American Labor Committee to Aid British Labor to give concrete proof to the British workers that we know what our responsibilities are, that we accept our role in this struggle against the darkness and decay of the Nazi, Fascist and Communist system of life.

All contributions go directly from our labor movement to the British Trades Union Congress. That means that the British workers can have no doubt about the measure of our fraternal support and determination to back them in their struggle.

Action, not words, is the order of the day. Let's get behind our fellow workers in Britain with all we can spare.

AFL Says Wages Are Still Below Health and Efficiency Standards

Washington, D. C.—Although strong labor unions have lifted the wage standards of millions since 1934, accompanying higher profits in industry which reached a monetary peak 12 per cent this spring, the income of workers is still inadequate to provide health and efficiency standards, according to the May issue of the Federationist.

"Wages are still far below the minimum necessary to support a family of five in health and efficiency" the Survey said. "This minimum is approximately $2,000 a year, or $1.00 per hour for a forty hour week with full employment.

"The average buying power of one hour's work has been lifted from 50 cents in 1933 to 70 cents in March 1941, first by N. R. A., then by union drives. But even at 70 cents it is still 30 cents below the minimum needed to give a family adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical care and the necessaries of an American standard.

"When we consider that this 70 cents represents the average hourly wage and makes no allowance for unemployment, we find that it averages only 68 per cent of our American family units will receive $2,000 a year or more, and half our family units (50 per cent) will receive less than $1,400, which is the minimum bare subsistence budget for a family of four."

News Briefs

ILGWU PROMISES TO BUY $500,000 IN DEFENSE BONDS

New York, N. Y.—Stirred by President Roosevelt's radio address, David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, announced that his organization had pledged itself to buy $500,000 worth of defense bonds.

Mr. Dubinsky, whose union is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, sent a telegram to the President assuring him that American labor "is behind you in this historic hour and will follow your inspiring and inspired leadership until the menace to the democratic way of life is swept away."

"I voice what is in the hearts of the 265,000 members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in saying that your undivided endorsement of the policies enunciated in your great address and our loyal support in the cause of our country and to you its spokesman," Mr. Dubinsky said.

DRAFTSMEN CHARTER FOUR NEW LOCALS

Washington, D. C.—The International Federation of Technical Engineers, Architects and Draftsmen's Unions reported a considerable increase in membership as chartered during May. New unions were chartered at New London, Conn.; Pottstown, Pa., and Chicago, Ill.

In the case of the Detroit local union, the engineering and associated group who were not included in the recent election as production workers at the Ford Motor Company, have supplied for a charter with the I.F.T.E. A.D.U., A. F. of L., to protect and maintain their identity.

11¼ CENTS WAGE BOOST WON BY MOLDERS UNION

Chicago, Ill.—An agreement was reached between the Chicago Local of the International Molders Union of North America (AFL) and the Chicago Foundrymen's Association carrying a wage increase of 11¼ cents an hour, William G. Murray, International Vice President and Union Director of Labor Martin P. Durkin brought about the settlement affecting hundreds of members in a large number of iron and brass foundries in the Chicago district.

OFFICE WORKERS SIGN UP TWO POWER COMPANIES

Meridian, Miss.—Agreements were signed between the Mississippi Power Company and the Mississippi Power & Federal Conciliator Donald were called in to assist in breaking the deadlock.

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LIFE INSURANCE AGENTS CHOOSE AFL AFFILIATE

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Industrial and Ordinary Insurance Agents Local Union No. 22164 of Richmond, Va., has registered another victory when the agents of the Life Insurance Company of Virginia and Richmond elected by a large majority for the American Federation of Labor to represent them in collective bargaining. Carey L. Russ, AFL organizer, said Richmond is the seventh district that has voted for the A. F. of L.

CHICAGO TEACHERS VOTE TO OUST RED LOCALS

New York, N. Y.—First returns on the national referendum being conducted by the American Federation of Teachers (AFL) on the move to oust two New York City and one Philadelphia local on the charge of Communist influence showed overwhelming votes in favor of revocation of the locals' charters, Mark Starr, membership director, announced today.

Of the 7,550 teachers in the Chicago Teachers Union (Local 1) entitled to vote, 5,258 voted for the ousters and 692 against them. The Chicago union is the largest single chapter in the federation, while the Teachers Union in this city (Local No. 5) has 9,000 members.

Action against the three locals was brought by the federation's executive council, which, last August, passed a resolution ordering a referendum to determine whether the charters should be revoked. It was charged that the locals had followed the Communist party line on virtually every issue.

"The chances are good that the executive council's recommendation on revocation will be accepted and then the way will be opened for a big expansion on the part of the American Federation of Teachers," Mr. Starr declared. "We anticipate a big advance in the numerical strength of the A. F. T. working in full cooperation with the American Federation of Labor."

Aid to Britain Must Be Redoubled, AFL Executive Council Declares

AFL TO CHARTER GRAIN PROCESSORS

International Union To Be Formed From 100 Locals

Washington, D. C.—The Executive Council authorized President William Green of the American Federation of Labor to issue an international union charter to the National Council of Grain Processors, made up of more than a hundred local unions with 30,000 members in the grain processing industry.

Mr. Green said the charter would be issued as soon as a few jurisdictional questions with regard to existing unions are straightened out.

In the past few years the A. F. of L. has made great progress in organizing employes in the flour, milling and cereal field. Organization has now reached the point where the Council felt justified in banding together the local unions into a strong international body.

Before adjourning its spring session, the Executive Council decided to hold its next meeting at the call of the president. This is the first time in many years that the Executive Council will meet in that city. Chief reason for going there was to take part in the 50th anniversary celebration of the founding of the first local union of carpenters in this country. The local was formed in Chicago in 1881.

The A. F. of L. was invited to hold its 1942 convention in Toronto by the Canadian Government. Officials of the Canadian Trades and Labor Congress, headed by President Tom Moore, submitted the invitation to the Council. The decision will be made by the coming A. F. of L. convention in Seattle.

BUTCHERS WIN PAY RAISE IN KNOXVILLE PLANT

Knoxville, Tenn.—An agreement was signed here between the East Tennessee Packing Company and the United Packing House Workers of America (CIO), granting wage increases ranging from 2½ cents to 10 cents an hour. R. C. Ross, AFL and Butcher Workmen, with wage in-the A. F. of L. organizing staff assisted Representative Lee Jordon of the international union in the negotiations.

Brands Totalitarianism as Deadly Menace to America

Washington, D. C.—American aid to Great Britain must be redoubled in speed and 'quality, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor declared in a statement following its regular policy.

The Council received a first hand report on conditions in Great Britain from Lord Marley, former Secretary for War in the British Cabinet and now visiting this country. The stirred visitor expressed "optimism" over the eventual outcome of the war, President William Green said.

In its declaration on the defense emergency, the Council said:

"The ragged resistance of the totalitarian powers in Europe during the past few months do not inspire fear in the hearts of the American people.

"Indeed as we are by the fall of Greece and Jugoslavia and the ineffectual efforts of Great Britain thus far to halt the Nazi conquest of Continental Europe, these events serve rather to intensify our determination that the final victory must be won by the forces of democracy.

"We know the defeatist counsel of the insignificant minority in this country whose misguided spokesmen try to tell us that an eventual totalitarian triumph is inevitable and that we should resign ourselves to it.

"We repudiate assertions that the United States of America can live and prosper in a world enslaved as a world dominated by totalitarianism.

"The American Federation of Labor never returned a more positive and unanimous conclusion of all its five million members that totalitarianism is the deadly enemy of American democracy.

"We regard totalitarianism as a malignant menace to all our freedoms, including free labor.

"We urge that our national policy of extending every possible aid to Great Britain and other democracies in their struggle against the totalitarian nations be not abandoned, but redoubled in quantity and speed."

President Green announced that Secretary-Treasurer George Meany had been designated by the council to visit Great Britain as the representative of American labor at the invitation of the British Trades Union Congress, Mr. Meany will be accompanied by another A. F. of L. official, as yet unannounced. Plans to leave sometime this month, if possible, by flight and make a thorough inspection of Great Britain's defense setup.

AFL Will Give "Capacity Service" To Nation In Defense Emergency

William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, declared that the 5,000,000 A. F. of L. members are "eager to give service of the highest type" in the present emergency.

In an editorial appearing in the June issue of the American Federationist, official monthly magazine of the A. F. of L., President Green wrote:

"The Chief Executive's proclamation declaring an unlimited national emergency confronts us with the immediate necessity of putting our military, naval and air defenses in readiness for action.

"To face the most grueling test to which our nation has ever been subjected—in discipline, loyalty to principle and ability to achieve. Upon our ability to produce the weapons of defense the fate of democracy rests.

"The American Federation of Labor and its unions and their membership will do their full part and more. We have as much at stake in the worldwide battle for human freedom as any other group in our nation. We pledge our cooperation, our services and our devotion.

"The results of defense progress after one year have not lived up to the production goals which we set for ourselves, but we have reached preparedness for many phases of defense industries.

"From now on we need better planning, better coordination, better management and more efficient unlimited production. To this end our Executive Council has pledged the cooperation of all affiliated unions in making full use of the conciliation and mediation machinery set up by the government, so that every effort can be made to prevent stoppage of work.

"The American Federation of Labor stands ready to do its part to prevent stoppages of work due to strikes. We have demonstrated the effectiveness of established collective bargaining in adjusting issues that would otherwise result in strikes. We built the cantonments on schedule—in many cases ahead of schedule—with the minimum of stoppages. Only .03 of one per cent working time was lost through strikes. In all production less than one per cent has been lost through strikes in the A. F. of L. unions.

"The labor movement of this free country is made up of workers who are loyal citizens and who value their precious heritage of rights. Those of us who serve this movement in responsible capacities have been gravely concerned that in this fateful time national unity of purpose and will to achieve should be strong and true.

"Now that the crisis has been proclaimed, we are eager to give service to capacity."

MINIMUM WAGE PLANNED FOR LUMBER PROCESSORS

Washington, D. C.—General Philip B. Fleming, administrator of the wage and Hour Division, U. S. Department of Labor, announced the appointment of a committee to investigate economic and competitive conditions in the lumber and timber products industry for the purpose of recommending a minimum wage, not to exceed 40 cents an hour, which will not substantially curtail employment in the industry." It is estimated that there are approximately 440,000 employes in the industry, of which about 200,000 are currently receiving at least 30 cents but less than 40 cents an hour.

A committee appointed to investigate competitive conditions in the wood furniture manufacturing industry for the purpose of recommending a minimum wage not in excess of 40 cents an hour includes on its employes section Robert J. Watt, AFL International Representative; Howard Bennett and M. A. Hutcheson, Indianapolis, Ind., both of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, and Sal B. Hoffman, president, Upholsterers Union of North America (AFL).

NEW TEAMSTERS PACT COVERS SEVEN CITIES

Jacksonville, Fla.—A contract was signed between the K. & L. Transportation Company and the local union of Teamsters, Chauffeurs and Helpers, covering employes in seven cities, J. E. Braddock, representing the union, and C. L. Shaw, representing the company, drafted the negotiations. The past provides substantial wage increases for every employe, union shop clause, seniority, check-off and shorter work week. The agreement covers all employes in the cities of Jacksonville, Wayeross, Valdosta, Tallahassee, Albany, Thomasville and Quincy, Fla., and drivers, pick-up and delivery, helpers, greasemen, checkers and warehousemen or dockmen.